

VZCZCXRO4050
PP RUEHAST RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHLA RUEHLN RUEHMRE RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR
RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHAH #0221/01 0530319
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 220319Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8436
INFO RUCNOSC/OSCE POST COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0628
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0682
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1885
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0193
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0215
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2/HSE/CCJ5//
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J5/RUE//
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-2/REA/NMJIC-J2//

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ASHGABAT 000221

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN (PERRY), SCA/PPD, EUR/ACE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [EAID](#) [TX](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN'S PRESIDENT BERDIMUHAMMEDOV'S CABINET
ANNOUNCEMENTS SO FAR

REF: ASHGABAT 214

Summary and Comment

11. (SBU) The collective impression of Berdimuhammedov's Cabinet decisions to date -- especially for the Ministries of Education and of Oil and Gas -- at first glance is dismaying and raises concerns that Turkmenistan's post-Niyazov governance is set to stay the same despite all the campaign hints of progressive change. The best case to be made to the contrary rests on arguments that Berdimuhammedov's parameters for significant new policies or personnel remain fragile at this stage; that he did subtly break with Niyazov to the modest extent feasible by bringing back some capable ministerial "retreads" whom Niyazov fired, and by elevating former deputies over Niyazov-appointed ministers; that he has yet to fill almost all the nine Deputy Chairmen positions with overarching authority in the Cabinet of Ministers, as well as all top security and law-enforcement slots and numerous other key second-level functionaries; and that even reappointed personnel who performed abysmally under Niyazov may prove capable now that they are freed from the latter's shadow.

12. (SBU) Locals making these arguments assume the existence of a traditional Turkmenistan society consensus that change can, and for security's sake probably should, only proceed at a very deliberate, moderate pace. They point out that, from the inside, Turkmenistan's status quo has appeared to be stable and could be far worse. Even if that premise holds some water, it begs the question of what reform can be hoped for if the new president's initial choices show so little sign of change. Pessimists note how quickly the public campaign airing of social and economic problems has slacked off since Election Day, and certain ways in which Berdimuhammedov has seemed to ape Niyazov, e.g., the ostentatious dispensation of cash to favored public artists while the elderly continue deprived of their pensions. The scorecard for the new president's first week in office is mixed; how he fills the Deputy Chairmen positions will provide a better indication of whether the pace of change in Turkmenistan will be glacial or just slow. End Summary and Comment.

¶3. (U) President Berdimuhammedov followed his quick post-inauguration appointments of the Foreign Minister, Central Bank Chairman and new Education Minister with a series of decrees on reappointments and new appointments, including the naming of eight more ministers on January 20. Also immediately following his inauguration, Berdimuhammedov designated Yusup Ishangulyev as Chief Administrative Officer of the Presidential Apparatus, replacing the Niyazov regime's Muhammetberdi Bashiyeu. Ishangulyev is reportedly in his early thirties and worked for the last half-dozen years alongside the president when he was Health Minister.

¶4. (SBU) Ministerial-level appointments or reappointments to date include:

-- the reappointment of Foreign Minister Meredov in his current position and simultaneous elevation to the status of Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers (i.e., Vice Premier), a post Meredov originally occupied but was stripped of in 2004 by Niyazov. Meredov at this point is the sole Deputy Chairman;

-- the reappointment as Central Bank Chairman of Geldymurat Abilov, who has served in that position since May 2006;

-- the appointment as Minister of Education of Hydyr Saparlyev, who served in the same position until being dismissed and sent to Armenia as ambassador by Niyazov in mid-2005.

-- the appointment of Tachberdy Tagiyev as head of the State Concern Turkmengas. Tagiyev was dismissed by Niyazov as Minister of Oil and Gas and Mineral Resources in 2003;

ASHGABAT 00000221 002 OF 003

-- the reappointment of Gurbanmyrad Atayev as Minister for Oil and Gas and Mineral Resources, but not to his collateral former position of Deputy Chairman;

-- the reappointment of current Agriculture Minister Esenmyrat Orazgeldiyev;

-- the appointment as Minister of Water Resources of Deputy Minister (since 2005) Myratgeldy Akmammedov;

-- the reappointment as Minister of Textile Industry of Byklymberdy Paromov;

-- the appointment as Minister of Economy and Finance of Khodjamirat Geldymyradov, who previously served since 2005 as deputy minister with portfolio for international technical assistance;

-- the return to government as State Minister and head of the Turkmenhaly (Turkmen carpets) state corporation of former Textile Industry Minister Djemal Geoklenova. Geoklenova was publicly fired by Niyazov in June 2006 for alleged nepotism and other irregularities (a fact omitted in the career summary printed in the February 21 Neutrality Turkmenistan). An embassy source asserts that she is the aunt of the director of the Foreign Trade Bank, who in turn is married to Berdimuhammedov's sister;

-- the appointment of Gurbanguly Myelekeyev as Minister of Trade and Consumer Affairs;

-- the reappointment of Garyagdy Tashliyev as State Minister and Chairman of the state corporation Turkmennebit (Turkmen Oil);

¶5. (U) Other appointments or reappointments:

-- Toyly Komekov as Chairman of the State Fisheries Committee;

-- Sherip Tajov as Chairman of the Joint-Stock Association for village services "Turkmenobahyzmat";

-- Annamuhamet Muhadov as Chairman of the State Cotton Concern "Turkmenpagta";

-- Annaguly Nurgeldiyev as Chairman of the State Ahal-Teke Horses Association "Turkmenatlary";

-- Nokerguly Atagulyev as Chairman of the Association of Foodstuff Industry of Turkmenistan.

16. (U) Available Biographies of Newly Appointed Officials:

-- Yusup Ishangulyev - the official press did not publish a biography. According to informal reports, prior to his new position Ishangulyev worked as Berdimuhammedov's assistant while the latter was the minister of health. Supposedly, Ishangulyev is 30 years old, rude, and has a medical education.

-- Tachberdy Tagiyev was born in 1955 in Etrek Etrap of Balkan Welayat. Education: Turkmen Polytechnic Institute. He majored in drilling and exploitation of oil and gas deposits (1977). Professional experience: 1977-1993 - specialist of Nebitdagnebit oil and gas production directorate; 1993-1997 - chairman of the oil and gas production directorate Gamyslyjanebit; 1997-1998 - deputy, first deputy chairman of the State Oil Concern Turkmennebit. November 2002 until October 2003 - Minister of Oil and Gas Industry and Mineral Resources. 2003-2006 governor of Balkan Welayat; 2006 until present appointment - director general of Turkmenbashi Oil Refinery.

-- Hojamyrat Geldimyradov was born in 1965 in Baharly Etrap of Ahal Welayat. Education: Turkmen Polytechnic Institute majored in economics and organization of construction (1989), Law Academy of Ukraine (2004). Professional experience: 1989-1990 - Designing and production self-financing construction bureau of Baharly Etrap; 1990-1997 - department chief of Baharly Etrap Tax Service; 1997-2004 - senior tax inspector, department chief of State Tax Service of Ahal Welayat; 2004-2005 - chief of department on supervision of the work of tax services of the Main State Service of Turkmenistan; 2005 until present appointment - deputy minister of economy and finance, national coordinator of international technical assistance to Turkmenistan.

ASHGABAT 00000221 003 OF 003

-- Myratgeldi Akmamedov was born in 1951 in Turkmengala Etrap of Mary Welayat. Education: Turkmen Polytechnic Institute majored in construction engineering (1976). Professional experience: 1976-1977 - inspecting engineer of the Ashgabat Inspection of the Ministry of irrigation engineering and water management; 1977-1984 - worked from mid-level to senior positions at the Saryyazy mobile mechanical division of the Ministry of irrigation engineering and water management; 1985-1990 - chief engineer of the Hauzhan mobile mechanical division, chief of mobile mechanical division No. 18 of the GlavKarakumstroy Administration; 1990-1994 - deputy hakim of Oguzhan Etrap of Mary Welayat; 1994-1995 - deputy chairman of Hedayat Association; 1995-2003 - chief of construction department of the Ministry of motor transport and highways; 2003-2005 - chief of department of industry, construction and mechanization of the Ministry of water management, head of Gunbatarsuhojalyk (department on irrigation and water management in western Turkmenistan) under the Ministry of water management; 2005 until present appointment - First deputy minister of water management.

-- Jemal Geoklenova was born in 1959 in Ashgabat. Education: Turkmen Institute of national economy majored in economics (1982). Professional experience: 1982-1985 - senior engineer of the Ministry of local industry; 1985-1991 - chief of planning and economics division of the department of public services of the Ashgabat city executive committee; 1991-1995 - director of the leasehold sewing association "Ahal", head of sewing association "Bahar"; 1995-1997 - First deputy minister of textiles; 1997-2002 - Minister of Textiles. Simultaneous to her ministerial job from 1999 to 2002 worked as Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and from 2000 to 2002 - as executive director of the State Fund for the development of textile industry. Between August and November of 2002 she worked as Counselor of the Turkmenistan Embassy in the Russian Federation.

-- Hydyr Saparlyev was born in 1958 in Mary city. Education: Turkmen Polytechnic Institute, majored in engineering (1982), Candidate of technical sciences (1986). Professional experience: 1982-1983 - teacher at the Turkmen polytechnic institute; 1983-1986

- post-graduate student at the Turkmen polytechnic institute;
1986-1994 - worked from engineer to head of laboratory at the scientific and research unit "Gun" of the Academy of sciences of Turkmenistan; 1994-1997 - professor, deputy dean at the Turkmen State Transport and Communication Institute, advisor to the Cabinet of ministers on science and education; 1998-1999 - assistant to Deputy Chairman of the cabinet of ministers, head of science and education department of the Cabinet of ministers; 2001-2004 - rector of the Turkmen polytechnic institute; 2004-2005 - minister of education; 2005 until present appointment - Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Armenia.

BRUSH